Pakistani pledge to cooperate US Forces

276. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press reports that the Musharraf Government has told the US military not to enter its territory without permission;

(b) if so, whether Government are aware that Pakistan has pledged continuing cooperation with American forces in fighting global terrorism and also in the effort to apprehend fleeing Al-Qaida and Taliban fugitives in Eastern Afghanistan; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (c) Government have seen reports of statements by Pakistani officials indicating that Pakistan had asked the US military not to enter its territory without permission in pursuit of Al-Qaida and Taliban fugitives fleeing from Eastern and Southern Afghanistan.

Following the September 11 terrorist attacks in the US. Pakistan has extended limited and reluctant cooperation to the American forces in apprehending some of the Al-Qaida and Taliban fugitives fleeing from Eastern and Southern Afghanistan.

It is widely understood by the international community that following the demise of Taliban in Afghanistan, Pakistan has become the epicentre of terrorism today. While Pakistan has extended some limited and reluctant cooperation in the operations against terrorists entering its territory from its western borders, it has continued its policy of supporting and providing safe heaven to international terrorism and using terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy against India This duplicitous policy of Pakistan has been widely recognised and many governments have asked Pakistan to stop the sponsorship of cross-border terrorism and dismantle the infrastructure of and support to terrorism in that country.

Indian policy towards Gulf War

277. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Government's policy with regard to Iraq keeping in view the threat of war looming large on Iraq;